

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

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1. A buckle including an auxiliary locking feature comprising:
 - a female buckle part including belt or strap receiving portion, and a body portion defining a recess for receiving a mating portion of a male buckle part;
 - a male buckle part including a belt or strap receiving portion and a female buckle engaging part;
 - the body portion of said female buckle part including a pair of edge recesses;
 - the male buckle engaging part of said female buckle part including a pair of flexible prongs for insertion into the recess of said female part and for engaging said female part to secure the buckle parts together;
 - said prongs being accessible through said edge recesses for manually releasing said prongs to allow said male and female buckles to separate; and
 - manually controlled means engaging the prongs of said male buckle part for selectively preventing the flexing of said prongs and release of said buckle parts.

2. A buckle in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said manually controlled means comprises a manually operated button and includes resilient means carrying said button; and wherein said means which normally engage said prongs releases said prongs upon operation of said button.

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3. A buckle in accordance with Claim 2 wherein said female buckle part includes a front

wall having an aperture therein and said button is accessible through said aperture.

4. A buckle in accordance with Claim 2 wherein said resilient means is a cantilevered member formed integrally with a buckle part and is located within the recess of said female part when said buckle is engaged.

5. A buckle in accordance with Claim 4 wherein said cantilevered member is formed integrally with said male buckle part.

6. A buckle in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said female buckle part has a generally planar front surface including at least one portion extending above the planar front surface in the region of said manually controlled means to protect said manually controlled means from unintentional operation.

7. A buckle in accordance with Claim 6 wherein said manually controlled means comprises a button exposed on said generally planar surface and (said protecting means) comprises a pair of ribs.

Sub 8. 8. A buckle in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said male buckle part includes a cantilevered tongue located between said prongs and carrying said manually controlled means.

9. A buckle in accordance with Claim 8 wherein said manually controlled means is a button carried by said cantilevered tongue and operational to deflect said tongue away from said

~~prongs to allow said prongs to flex and to release the buckle parts.~~

Sub 105 10. A buckle in accordance with Claim 1 wherein said manually controlled means comprises a member mounted for movement with respect to said prongs to move from a first prong locking position to a second prong unlocking position in response to manual action of the user.

11. A buckle in accordance with Claim 10 wherein said movable mounted member comprises a button depressible to move said member out of engagement with said prongs.

~~12. A buckle in accordance with Claim 10 wherein said movable mounted member is slidable with respect to said prongs.~~

~~13. A buckle in accordance with Claim 10 wherein said movable mounted member is rotatable with respect to said prongs.~~

Sub 14 14. A plastic buckle comprising;
a female part including a belt attachment loop at one edge and a male part receiving opening at the opposite end from said belt attachment loop;
said female part having a front face, a rear face and a pair of edges;
said female part defining a pair of recesses one in each of said edges communicating with said male part receiving opening;
a male part including a belt attachment loop at one edge and a pair of prongs at the opposite edge dimensioned to enter said male part receiving opening in said female part and for

engaging said recesses to secure said male and female parts together and to flex under finger pressure to release said male and female parts;

said buckle further including means normally engaging said prongs when said prongs are positioned to secure said male and female parts together and for preventing the prongs from releasing said male and female parts; said buckle further including manually operable means for disengaging said prong release preventing means.

15. ~~A plastic buckle comprising:~~

a female part including a belt attachment loop, an opening at the opposite end from said belt attachment loop, a front face, a rear face and a pair of edges, each of said edges including a recess communicating with said opening:

a male part including a belt attachment loop and a pair of prongs dimensioned to enter the opening of said female part, each of said pair of prongs including a catch engaging one of said recesses to secure said male and female parts together and said prongs being adapted to flex under finger pressure to disengage said catch from said recesses to release said male and female parts;

said buckle further including a member normally engaging said prongs when said prongs are positioned to secure the male and female parts together to prevent said prongs from releasing said male and female parts; and

manually operable means for disengaging said prong engaging member from said prongs.

16. ~~A buckle in accordance with claim 15 wherein said manually operable means includes a button and resilient means carrying said button and said member.~~

17. A buckle in accordance with claim 15 wherein the front face of said buckle includes an aperture therein and said button is normally positioned in said aperture.

18. A buckle in accordance with claim 15 wherein said male part includes a cantilevered tongue located between said prongs and carrying said manually operable means.

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